



**Intelligence Assessment**  
**Évaluation du renseignement**

TOP SECRET

CSIS IA 2012-13/109 B

## A CSIS Perspective on "Illegal" Migration

The intelligence cut-off for this IA was December 12th, 2012.

The arrivals of the MV Ocean Lady in 2009 and the MV Sun Sea in 2010 focussed the Canadian intelligence community's attention on human smuggling. Canada is also vulnerable to terrorist travel and illegal migration threats beyond maritime human smuggling of ethnic-Tamils. This intelligence assessment examines the kinds of threats posed by that broader phenomenon, and their implications for the mandates of intelligence services.

### Illegal vs. Irregular Migration

Travel by modes and means not explicitly legally mandated is often referred to as "irregular", rather than "illegal" migration.

Economic migrants and persons genuinely fleeing persecution may attempt to access Canadian territory through irregular or "illegal" means to engage in otherwise lawful activities.

Applying for refugee status on or after arrival in Canada, for example, is lawfully mandated and not "illegal".

A defining feature of "illegal" migration is travel by clandestine, deceptive and criminal means to circumvent lawful entry requirements and procedures established by legitimate national authorities.

### Illegal Migration – The Security Threat

Illegal migration poses a range of threats to Canadian sovereignty, border integrity and security. The Service's legal mandate requires attention to harm to Canadian security interests through its possible use by non-state terrorist organizations, state-sponsors of terror and foreign intelligence services.

The potential for inbound travel to North America to support or participate in terrorist operations is a high priority threat to Canadian and allied national security.

### Components of Illegal Migration

1. Components of the broad concept of "illegal", or irregular, migration include its objectives, movements, techniques, and networks. The ultimate objectives of irregular migration may be either legal or illegal. Spontaneous irregular migration movements to escape imminent danger or severe and sustained economic dislocation are not inherently illegal. Illegal migration techniques are used, however, by networks involved in a range of clearly criminal offences which threaten Canadian border integrity and security. By the nature of its mandate the Service is primarily concerned with components of this phenomenon which are illegal.

### Illegal Migration Objectives

2. Travel by fraud, deception and essentially unlawful methods can facilitate two very different objectives. Firstly, criminal methods and support networks can facilitate the travel of persons who engage after arrival in otherwise legal activities, such as employment, education or reunification with family members. Secondly, unlawful means can be exploited by individuals or groups who engage after arrival in activities which are themselves illegal, and injurious to the safety and security interests of Canada.

3. Concealing a threat-related objective to obtain a lawfully issued visa by deception can be included in the broader concept of "illegal" migration. Refugee claims and travel on student and tourist status may be abused by affiliates of terrorist organizations, for example, to gain entry to Canada under legal status, although they would not be admissible if their membership and objectives were disclosed. The broad freedom of movement enjoyed by North American and European nationals may also be exploited by citizens of those countries for travel to support or engage in terrorist operations.

### Illegal Migration Movements

4. Armed conflict, political instability, ethno-religious tensions and global economic disparities are exploited by illegal migration facilitators and networks. These conditions create a market for irregular travel to more stable and economically prosperous areas. They also open ideological and geographic space for terrorist organizations, their supporters, and state sponsors of terrorism.

5. Conditions in conflict zones in particular have generated both illegal migration movements and terrorist and insurgent organizations. Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, for example, have been source countries for significant refugee outflows.

Nationals of these countries are also active in movements of members of their own and other ethnic groups through transit hubs in Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America to North America by criminal means.

### Air and Land Movements

Maritime human smuggling has been a particular concern for the Canadian intelligence community.

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8. While criminally-assisted illegal migration to North America and terrorism result from similar causes, reliable conclusions about the extent to which irregular migration movements are associated with actual and current terrorist threats requires a systematic and detailed analysis of specific groups and movements.

### Illegal Migration Techniques

9. A range of techniques are available to networks involved in movements of persons by irregular means, including organizations and groups of security concern. Techniques employed by illegal migration facilitators and improperly documented migrants can be broadly categorized as follows:

- Altered, counterfeited or improperly obtained travel documents for travel to Canada, usually to make a refugee claim on or after arrival.
- Abuse of legal migration programs to apply abroad for genuine visas under false pretexts.
- Covert entry at unauthorized land-border crossings.
- Undocumented and unauthorized mass maritime arrivals and stowaways.

10. These techniques are often used in combination. They frequently involve travel under a false name, or a variant of a real name altered to obscure true identity

#### "Forged" document terminology

Documents used by Potential Irregular Immigrants (PIIs) travelling by air and land are commonly described as either counterfeit, altered, improperly obtained, or genuine. PIIs travelling on documents which have not been issued to them by a legitimate authority are referred to as improperly documented passengers.

Use of a consistent, precise and common vocabulary in intelligence reporting facilitates analysis of "illegal" migration techniques and trends.

#### Terrorist Groups

11. Some members of terrorist organizations and their affiliates have been observed exploiting illegal migration techniques

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12.

In 2006, for

example, open sources reported that a Russian intelligence services (RIS) agent successfully used civil documents acquired in a fictitious identity to apply for genuine Canadian passports. He reportedly submitted what was described as an expertly forged, good quality reproduction of a provincial birth certificate to obtain three passports over the course of seven years. An expert witness in that case testified that counterfeit birth certificates are used by the RIS to create elaborate false backgrounds, or "legends". Historically, the RIS used a range of illegal migration techniques. As early as 1955, they attempted to abuse post-war refugee programs to obtain Canadian visas for two illegal agents. In the cold war- era, they also used photo-substitution of Canadian passports improperly obtained from complicit Communist Party members. According to open sources, classic techniques included use of multiple identities and documents for different travel stages.

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**Conclusion**

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24. At a strategic level, effective detection and deterrent counter-measures require prudent evaluation of potential security threats posed by illegal migration.

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